

SOUTHERN RED OAK

Quercus falcata Michx.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Red oak, Spanish oak, Water oak.

FORM: Usually 70-80 feet high, trunk 2-3 feet in diameter, large spreading branches forming a broad round-topped, open head.

BARK: 3/4-1 inch thick, dark brown or pale, divided by shallow fissures into broad ridges covered with thin closely appressed scales.

TWIGS: Stout, at first coated with orange-colored tomentum, dark red or reddish-brown by autumn, later red-brown or ashy-gray.

LEAVES: Alternate, simple, ovate to obovate, narrowed and rounded or cuneate at base; in one form divided by deep oblique sinuses rounded at bottom into 3, 5, or 7 bristle-pointed lobes; terminal lobe usually much elongated, often falcate, acute, entire or repanddentate near apex, with 1 or 2 large bristle-pointed teeth; lateral lobes oblique or spreading, often falcate, acute, entire; in 5 or 7 lobed leaves, middle or upper pairs of lobes are oblique and lobulate at apex; in another form, leaves oblong-obovate, divided at apex by wide or narrow sinuses broad and rounded at bottom into three rounded or acute entire or dentate lobes; both forms occur on same or different trees or on same branch.

FLOWERS: Monoecious; staminate in tomentose aments 3-5 inches long; pistillate on stout tomentose peduncles; involucre scales coated with rusty tomentum.

FRUIT: Nut subglobose to ellipsoidal, rounded at apex, truncate and rounded at base, about 1/2 inch long, light orange-brown, enclosed only at base, sometimes 1/3 of its length in thin saucer-shaped cup.

WINTER BUDS: Ovoid or oval, acute, 1/8-1/4 inch long with bright chestnut-brown puberulous or pilose scales.

WOOD: Hard, strong, coarse-grained, light red with thick, lighter colored sapwood

USES: Lumber, pulp, furniture, cabinets, veneer, millwork, fuel. Historical uses: tannin, medicine.

Dry gravelly uplands, rich and often inundated bottom lands.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Variation in shape of leaves on the same tree, and on same branch; drooping habit of leaves and rusty covering on their lower surface.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Common in almost every region of the state.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| 1. A leaf | 5. A fruit |
| 2. A branch | 6. A fruit |
| 3. A leaf | 7. A fruit |
| 4. A fruit | |



Quercus falcata Michx.